

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, September 9, 2014**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III (absent), Vice-Chair Dennis Donahue, Selectmen Kevin T. Beal, Brad Denny, Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois (absent), Kenneth W. Goslant, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson (absent). Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Ramon Hudson (Road Foreman), Michele Braun (Zoning Administrator), Arlington Supplee (Chair, Board of Listers), Steven Jeffrey (Chair, Planning Commission), John Stevens (Brown Public Library Trustee), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Acting Chair Donahue called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** A possible executive session had been warned tonight but as there is no need, it will be removed from the agenda.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Arlington Supplee, Board of Listers: Town-Wide Reappraisal Update.** Mr. Supplee reported that since the last time he addressed the Select Board (07/08/14), the appraisers have completed home inspections for about half (314) of the remaining six hundred (600) residential parcels. The plan is to complete these inspections by October 2014 and then begin on the approximately one hundred (100) commercial parcels. This should be done by mid-November 2014. During the winter months (December 2014 through February 2015), the data collected will be reviewed and evaluated. The reappraisal booklets should be sent to the printer in March 2015 with distribution to the public the following month. Selectman Beal thanked Mr. Supplee for overseeing what appears to be a very efficient operation. Mr. Supplee stated that many homeowners in the downtown area (formerly "Northfield Village") still need to contact the Listers' Office (485-6004) to schedule interior inspections. Chair Donahue also thanked Mr. Supplee for tonight's project update. Mr. Supplee will provide a follow-up report in about three (3) months.

V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT**

- a. **Road Foreman Ramon E. Hudson.** Mr. Hudson provided the Select Board with a written report of his department's activities since his last report (07/22/14). He also wanted to provide information regarding the roads scheduled to be repaved during the current fiscal year, which include Smith Hill Road, Winch Hill Road, Hill Street, Byam Hill, Jarvis Lane, and Washington Avenue. Selectman Goslant asked if this list was derived from the RSMS (Road Surface Management System) Program. Mr. Hudson confirmed that it was. An inventory of Northfield's paved and unpaved roads was distributed to the Select Board tonight that indicated those roads that required little or no maintenance and those that required rehabilitation and/or reconstruction work. Manager Schulz said this inventory was reviewed when the highway paving bids were evaluated. The estimated cost of highway paving this fiscal year is about \$102,000. Selectman Beal asked how much money was in the highway paving budget. Manager Schulz said about \$150,000, which includes about \$90,000 that had been in the Northfield Village Highway CIP account. The paving funds not spent this fiscal year would carry over to the next one. Selectman Maxwell feels that having a long-term road maintenance plan on hand would be very helpful during the next budget sessions. As this expense has been budgeted, a motion is not required.

Selectman Goslant noted in Mr. Hudson's report that the cost of road salt was going up this winter. He asked how much this increase would be. Steven Jeffrey, who has been working with Vermont communities on this matter as Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, estimated that statewide the increase will be about forty percent (40%). Selectman Goslant asked if this meant that salt use will be restricted this winter. Manager Schulz stated that every effort will be made to stay on budget.

Selectman Goslant saw members of the Highway crew working in front of the Brown Public Library today repairing the front steps and railing. He commended them for their work. Kathleen Lott also thanked the Highway Department for recent work on Aseltine Road, which is much smoother now.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **August 26, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**
- b. **September 2, 2014 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-1, with Selectman Maxwell abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #06-15.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #06-15 in the amount of \$1,433,442.91. Chair Donahue noted that of this amount, about \$1,000,000 was property taxes collected by the Town and then forwarded to the Northfield School District. In addition, about \$300,000 was a Northfield Electric Department power purchase. Selectman Goslant saw that about \$3000 was spent putting the new higher-visibility lettering and graphics on Northfield Police Department (NPD) vehicles. He did not see the point of this and felt the expense was unjustified. Selectman Denny also was surprised at the amount spent and felt that it sent the wrong message to the community when the Select Board is making every effort to keep expenses down. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #06-15A.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve Warrant # 06-15A in the amount of \$355,268.41. Chair Donahue stated that this is to cover the financing of the bank notes below. Selectman Maxwell asked if the Accounting Department shopped banks in order to obtain the lowest possible interest rate. Manager Schulz confirmed that this was the case. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**
- c. **Bi-Weekly Payroll through August 31, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$74,378.57. Selectman Goslant noted that NPD overtime expenses have returned. Manager Schulz believes that the bulk of this was due to their expanded presence during the Labor Day Weekend Festivities. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Grant Anticipation Note (Fairground Road Bridge).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Note in the amount of \$1,074,000 at 1.20% interest; to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Borrowing Tax Certificate. Manager Schulz said that the Town was obtaining this line of credit while it seeks grant funds to cover its local share amount for the Fairground Road Replacement Project. Selectman Goslant asked when the project was supposed to begin. Manager Schulz stated that signage will be installed this week and construction will begin on Wednesday, September 24, 2014. The temporary bridge will be installed first. Manager Schulz emphasized that FEMA will be paying about ninety percent (90%) of the total project costs. The State of Vermont will pay about five percent (5%) and Northfield is responsible for a five percent (5%) local share. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**
- b. **Bond Anticipation Note (FY 2010/2011 RSMS).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Note in the amount of \$180,000 at 1.20% interest; to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Grant Anticipation Borrowing Tax Certificate. Manager Schulz stated that the Town obtained a \$300,000 bond in 2010, paid off part of this amount in the interim, and now is refinancing the loan at a lower interest rate. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**
- c. **Proposed Northfield Town Plan Revisions.** Planning Commission Chair Steven Jeffery stated that since the Northfield Municipal Plan that was approved in August 2009 expired last month, the Town currently is without a Town Plan. This makes Northfield illegible for certain grant funds until a new plan is approved by the Select Board. He recommends that the Select Board approve the current draft tonight and if there remain any concerns, these could be resolved by amending the approved plan over the next few months. Mr. Jeffrey noted that most of the anxiety about the proposed plan is due to a suggested change in lot size requirements that is only a proposal at this time and not incorporated in the plan itself.

Selectman Goslant said that this is a very complex matter and would not like to commit Northfield to a bad Town Plan out of ignorance. Mr. Jeffery noted that the Planning Commission spent about nine (9) months reviewing and revising the current draft (with input from the public) before it was forwarded to the Select Board in July 2014. Zoning Administrator Michele Braun added that this would be a five (5) year plan for the future subject to review and revision during this period. She added that the Town now is operating with basically the same zoning regulations as in the 1970s and this has inhibited local growth. Manager Schulz noted that many of the goals in this plan had been a part of the 2009 Municipal Plan. He supports Mr. Jeffery's recommendation that the current draft be approved at this time and revisions made in the near future (if needed). He agreed that the lack of an approved Town Plan is a great hindrance to the community. Ms. Braun confirmed that the Town already has lost an opportunity to apply for a municipal planning grant.

Selectman Denny added that without an approved Town Plan, Northfield would lose participant status in any Act 250 hearing. Also, the Town is considering applying for an Historic Preservation grant in order to rehabilitate the Brown Public Library so Northfield really cannot be excluded from making grant applications at this time. Selectman Denny is not taking sides regarding the ten (10) acre minimum lot size issue, especially since this matter will be fully discussed when Northfield's zoning regulations are revised next year. Chair Donahue also feels that the proposed plan should be adopted tonight and that the Select Board can work with the Planning Commission if there still remains any need for future amendments. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve the current draft of the Northfield Town Plan as proposed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Jeffery confirmed that the Planning Commission would work with the Select Board if any further revisions are requested. Additional public hearings would need to be held if substantive changes are made but this all could be done within three (3) months. Selectman Beal believes that although some people might have minor concerns, this is an excellent document and a good road map for the future. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

- d. **Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof Repairs.** BPL Trustee John Stevens reported two (2) bid proposals were received from engineering firms for the proposed roof repair. Interviews have been scheduled for next week and then a recommendation will be forwarded to the Select Board. Mr. Stevens stated that solid numbers have to be on hand before Northfield can apply for grant funds to pay for some (if not all) of the work. Selectman Denny believes that the Vermont's Historical Preservation Division probably will allow the installation of a metal roof provided that it matches the color and character of the original slate.
- e. **Town Buildings & Energy Committee Report.** Selectman Denny stated that the Committee has been looking into problems affecting the Brown Public Library/Northfield Historical Society (BPL/NHS) building including and beyond the need for roof repairs. He felt it was good news that the heating system is fairly new since it was installed when the extension that includes the Community Room was built in the late 1990s. The main cause of the excess heating bills is the complicated control system that none of the current BPL staff know how to operate. The BPL/NHS building is only opened limited hours and some sections remain closed most of the week. Selectman Denny would like an engineering firm to come in and redesign the control system so that the entire complex isn't heated when only limited areas are open to the public. If this is accomplished, there should be significant savings in heating costs. He has learned that there are modern control systems that can sense whether a certain room is occupied or not at a certain time because of CO levels in the room, etc. In addition, Selectman Gadbois contacted Road Foreman Hudson on the need to replace the front steps and railing and the best way to accomplish it. Selectman Denny added that the Committee also will be seeking the source of the building leaks as well as some other minor issues. Chair Donahue felt that it was good that problems are being identified and we are moving forward with this. Selectman Maxwell asked how these repairs can be done if they have not been budgeted. Selectman Denny believes that some safety issues need to be resolved whether or not this is in the current budget. Also, he felt that since this undeniably is an historic structure, the Town of Northfield is a very good position to apply for an historic preservation grant.

Selectman Goslant is concerned that a full building inspection might discover major problems with a big price tag. He also felt that there also are significant deficiencies with the Municipal Building and Town Garage that also need to be addressed. Selectman Denny stated that the Committee looked into BPL problems first as they were considered more immediate concerns due to the leaky roof and safety issues. The Committee will be looking into all municipal facilities in the near future. Selectman Maxwell feels that there should be a long-term determination on whether certain facilities with problems should be renovated, relocated, etc.

- f. **Weekday Parking Restrictions on Depot Square.** Manager Schulz noted that some Depot Square merchants have asked that the current weekday two (2) hour storefront parking restriction be extended to include the parking spaces around the interior common. A new Town Traffic Ordinance has been drafted that would combine the old Town and Village Traffic Ordinances into one document. The only substantive change in the new ordinance would be to revise the section on Depot Square parking as indicated above. There remain a couple issues to be resolved with the draft ordinance but these should be resolved soon. Chair Donahue would like this put forward as soon as possible. It was decided that a public hearing will be held on Tuesday, October 14, 2014, so that interested members of the public can provide their views on the draft ordinance and in particular the revised section on Depot Square parking. Manager Schulz will contact the Depot Square merchants and inform them of this development.
- g. **Scheduling the Annual Select Board Retreat.** Selectman Goslant felt that it would be best to hold off on this until Chair John Quinn III (and the other Selectmen absent tonight) can provide input. Chair Quinn will be contacted by email to determine how to go forward on this.
- h. **Status Reports: Various Projects.** There was nothing additional at this time.

IX. **BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS.** The Selectmen had nothing to add

X. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **New Utility Department Vehicle.** Manager Schulz stated that there are funds in the utility budgets to replace the vehicle now being used for meter reading. The Water/Sewer Department employees also use this vehicle at other times for transport to training sessions around the state, etc. Manager Schulz spoke with Utility Office Manager (and Meter Reader) Doug Reed and Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi and they recommended that a four-wheel drive vehicle be purchased. He then received a price for the vehicle based on the State of Vermont's bid price. Selectman Beal felt that there probably would not be a lower price available for this particular vehicle. Selectmen Maxwell and Goslant both questioned the need for a four-wheel drive vehicle to replace the current compact vehicle. Chair Donahue noted that the purchase of a four-wheel drive vehicle for this purpose was approved during the budget process. Selectman Beal added that the payment would be covered by enterprise funds so it would not directly impact the local taxpayer. Manager Schulz stated that due to the concerns expressed tonight, he will obtain additional information for the next meeting on the necessity for a four-wheel vehicle.

XI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

XII. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Beal, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board Meeting of September 23, 2014.